



The Steller's Quill

BCGREA New Westminster & District Branch 800

"Spring 2018" Newsletter

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Branch 800 Membership Satisfaction Survey

Branch 800 is doing a Members' Satisfaction Survey. The purpose of the survey is to gauge the level of satisfaction with the current monthly meeting format with the objective of finding ways to increase attendance. You can do the survey on-line **before April 24, 2018** at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/32VNBHD>.

Christmas Luncheon Report

By: **Bonnie Billington**-2nd Vice-Chair BCGREA 800

The Branch 800 Annual Christmas luncheon was held in the Centennial Community Centre River Room on December 5th with 60 members attending. The buffet was plentiful and nicely prepared again this year by **Greens and Beans Deli**. The same venue has been approved **by the membership for this year's luncheon**.

Thanks to **Pansy Wong** for managing ticket sales and to all who donated, volunteered and worked together to put on a successful enjoyable event.



Jean Ing's Treasure Chest



Door Prizes



Buffet lunch

Highlights:

- ❖ **Jean Ing's** lovely 'treasure chest' food basket.
- ❖ **Branch 800 members** donated a total of \$180.00 and an estimated 150 pounds of non-perishables to the Greater Vancouver & District Food Bank; organized by **Anna & Ross Tremere**.
- ❖ Poinsettias were delivered by **Ross & Anna** again this year to eleven members in facility care and three in their homes who were unable to attend the luncheon.
- ❖ Door prizes were drawn following lunch. Extra door prizes were solicited by **Christine & Harry Demchuk** and gift cards were donated by the following generous community businesses: **Save on Foods at Market Crossing** in Burnaby, **London Drugs** -6th St New Westminster, **Buy Low Foods** -6th St New Westminster and **GardenWorks at Mandeville** in Burnaby.

In Memory of Lorraine Logan 1944 to 2018



After 31 years of service with the BC Government, Lorraine retired and joined our branch in 2003. Her voice could be heard at nearly every meeting as she was willing to share her opinions and to encourage others to get involved in activities within the branch and activities outside of branch.

Lorraine served as one of our delegates to COSCO for many years, and lastly as President of COSCO. She was willing to take on other committee activities for our branch and help

with any tasks as needed.

In October 2010, by vote of the delegates to the Provincial AGM, Lorraine became an Honoured member of BCGREA. Members describe her as loyal, a force to be reckoned with, persistent, open, supportive, and a tireless advocate.

Lorraine set a high standard for us in her activism and efforts to make life better for seniors and society. We will truly miss her.

Report from the Chair

by **Myrna Cresswell** -Chair BCGREA 800

Greetings to you all. Your executive has decided to undertake a survey of our members. We would like to hear from you anonymously or otherwise, so we may understand the wishes and needs of our members. Please complete our 10 – question survey on line at the secure and anonymous survey link noted in the first page of our newsletter.

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Since our fall newsletter, we have continued with both social and educational activities at the branch.

In November, Tanya-Lyn Werk gave an informative and insightful presentation on **Powers of Attorney** with tips and ideas for safe handling of our personal finances. In January, we had an excellent presentation from Maxine Dominelli, from the **Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (WIDHH)** who not only provided advice to people with hearing problems but gave us all advice on how better to communicate with people with hearing issues. February 20, we had a presentation from **Johanna Griffin**, a certified yoga instructor on **chair yoga** and spent about 1/2 hour participating in a shortened chair yoga class that emphasized breathing for life.

For the balance of this fiscal year, meeting dates and activities include:

- **March 20:** Short business meeting followed by our Spring Potluck lunch.
- **April 17:** - Agnes Jackman, COSCO, on Universal Homecare
- **May 15:** Lisa Hanson of Johnson Insurance
- **June 19:** Branch AGM and summer social.

Branch 800 membership is currently 762. Finances are sound. The branch members have appointed **Valerie Davies**, as Chair of the Finance Review Committee for this fiscal year. **Dennis Ishikawa**, and **Loralee Wilkin** were also appointed to serve on this committee.

Our Board member **Verna Cadwallader** was granted a leave of absence and our member **Donna Main** has been appointed as a Director of the branch until the end of this fiscal year. Congratulations to **Navin Goburdhun**, our 1st Vice Chair and Delegate to COSCO who has been elected as a Director at Large at COSCO.

Thank you and kudos to all our volunteers: Branch Officers, Directors, Committee Chairs and members, food and beverage volunteers and our diligent phoners. Special thank you to our newest Director **Donna Main**, who has spent many hours on our branch survey.

Members interested in joining the executive as an officer or director, please contact me before June 1, 2018. As outgoing Chair, I am chairing the Nominating Committee.

Welcome New Members

Welcome to the following new members who have joined Branch 800 since our last newsletter:

Carmelo Amenta, Francine Anselmo, Jeannie Marie Beattie, Barry Abram Driedger and Tania Hermina Murphy.

Universal Pharmacare

by **Navin Goburdhun** - 1st Vice-Chair BCGREA 800

The life expectancy of Canadians in the general population is ever changing. People are living much longer.

Longevity and global *active-aging* have been making quite an impact, particularly with seniors, so much so, that a special new category has been created. Created for those who are or would be 110 years and older, naming them – **Supercentenarian**. And, we do have some Canadians in that category.

With the population increasing in number, as well as growing older, health care needs and services required will be even more of a concern on the health care system.

Moreover, it is a sheer embarrassment to imagine, that in this time and age, some Canadians are in such dire straits that access to affordable prescription drugs is practically impossible for them.

It is so difficult, that at times they must make a choice between putting food on the table or filling their drug prescription.

Difficult choice to make. They do not have insurance coverage for their prescription drugs.

Moreover, the medications are very expensive too.

A study conducted by Dr. Michael Law of UBC found that, in 2016, 730,000 people sacrificed themselves on food, and 230,000 spent less on heating their home to pay for their prescription drugs.

The predicament that these Canadians are facing is due to the Canadian health care system that is in place.

Canada, it has been found, is the only country with a universal health care program that does not include a universal prescription drug plan when it comes to quality and timeliness of service.

As a matter of fact, the idea of a universal pharmacare program is an old one. Prescription drug coverage was part of a comprehensive national health care proposal being considered in Canada and England as far back as 1940. While England chose to establish a universal health care program with coverage for Hospital Care, Physician Services & Prescription Medications, Canada chose not to include prescription medication in its plan.

But since, with perseverance and persistence, universal pharmacare program found its way again as a goal in the 2004 – 2014 Health Accord. Unfortunately, this goal was never achieved. The Health Accord expired in 2014, so did the goal of establishing a universal pharmacare program.

If and when it is implemented, Universal Pharmacare would:

- I. Provide Canadians with access to needed drugs regardless of where they live.
- II. Help control the high cost of drugs.
- III. Ensure drug safety.
- IV. Provide Canadians with a yearly savings of between \$4 and \$11 billion.

But until a fully fledged pharmacare system is in place, it is a very sad state of affairs to realize that, in Canada, in 2015, 3.5 million written drug prescriptions were not filled.

This was due to:

- ❖ High costs of medications
- ❖ No insurance coverage
- ❖ Having to choose between putting food on the table for the family and filling the prescription.

The only way to remedy the above situation is to introduce a Universal Pharmacare Program. A program which will assure that Canadians:

- ❖ Have prescription drug coverage to alleviate serious financial hardship if they or their family members get sick.
- ❖ To prevent them skipping their daily medication intake to make the medication last longer.

As you can appreciate, the root cause of all the problems facing Canadians as depicted above, is due to a lack of a pharmacare program.

I have every reason to believe that the time has finally come for the significant decision-makers of the Government of Canada to respect and adhere to the United Nations Declaration, that "Everybody is entitled to medical treatment and pharmaceutical drugs" and in so doing establish an efficient universal pharmacare program for all Canadians to make good use of. Thus, reinstating the Canadian people's pride in its Medicare System.

In Memoriam

We regret to announce the passing of the following members since the last newsletter:

Istvan Jemo (Steve) Bardi	Olive Brass	R Thomas (Tom) Davy
James (Jimmy) Fenton	Doris Joan Gracey	Irene Solange Hartley-Guminy
Patrick (Pat) Kernaghan	Patricia (Pat) Irene Klaholz	Marina Virginia Knopp
Lorraine Joan Logan	Catherine Josephine McGill nee Stephenson	
John Joseph McPartlin	Marjorie Norris	Jolene Ina Faye Pennoyer
Grace E Stewart		

The Executive and members of the BCGREA, New Westminster & District Branch 800
Express sincere condolences to these families and their friends.

English

By Andy McColl

This is not a diatribe about the people who live in the bottom half of the British mainland. Just a few wee anecdotes about how the language can trip people up.

It will likely surprise those who know me but when I was a child my parents sent me to Sunday School with my siblings. This lasted until I was six when the older kids rebelled. I joined the rebels. I must have been a good student for I remember winning a prize. Come to think of it all the kids my age must have been good students too, for everyone got a prize.

I was a fairly good reader at that age and was able to read the little book I was awarded. All I remember about the book is the kid in the story had a mother who was an invalid. (Horrible word that, when you think about it.)

The first sentence in the story had me stumped. "Lionel's mother did not enjoy good health."

I could not get my head around why someone would not enjoy good health. I associated ill health with bed and getting my temp taken; good health, on the other hand, was getting out to play. A no-brainer. The concept puzzled me for a week or two until I mentioned the line to an adult and they explained it to me.

Another puzzler was the texts in gold paint around the interior wall of the church. I couldn't make that stuff out. It would be a few more years before I could read Gothic script.

In the early 'sixties I saw a German made blender in an appliance store on Wellmeadow Street in Paisley, Scotland. The Germans evidently looked after their own advertising for one of the blender's features was "Mixes excellent well".

I could be maligning the translator, for one gem I remember was the warning notice a painter had posted by his handiwork, "Wat Pent". It made me think of a character from Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, or *Robin Hood*.

And, of course, not to neglect the old Argyll & Bute Hospital where I took my nurse training. The ward's staff toilet went out of order one day and one of the staff was told to put a notice on the door to alert the staff.

It read "Yous are not aloud to yous this toilet".

No kidding, "toilet" was spelled correctly.

Then there was the evening Jimmy, the Infirmary's Charge Nurse at the time, paused while writing the day's report, raised his head and called out to his staff "How do you spell 'to'?" Or it might have been 'too', or 'two'.

Mel, the closest student, called back "Which 'to' do you want, Jimmy, tee – oh, tee double- oh or tee doubleyou- oh?"

Maybe he shouldn't have had a grin on his face.

Jimmy gazed blankly for about five seconds, then growled "None of your lip, boy, all I want to know is how do you spell 'to'". Or it might have been 'too', or 'two'.

FIN

2018 Contact Information upon the death of a BC Public Services Pensioner, their spouse or their beneficiary.

A) Death of a Pensioner

British Columbia Public Services Pension Services (PSPP) – Victoria.

Toll free in Canada and US: Retired members number: 1-866-876-6777 or General number: 1-800-665-3554

Information to have on hand if you have it when making call:

- Pensioner's full name and "Person ID" (this is an eight digit number found on the top of all past correspondence received from PSPP)
- Social Insurance Number (SIN) of pensioner
- Date of Birth of pensioner
- Date of Death of pensioner

B) Death of Pensioner's Spouse or Beneficiary

PSPP must be notified upon the death of a pensioner's spouse or beneficiary to change the beneficiary, otherwise any remaining benefits will be paid to the pensioner's estate.

Benefit coverage may also have to be adjusted.

C) Death Certificate

A copy of the death certificate is also required in both cases.

D) PSPP website: - www.pspp.pensionsbc.ca

Click on "**Your Pension**" – scroll down and click on "**Death & Death Benefits**".

INFORMATION OF OTHER CONTACTS TO BE CONSIDERED.

- 1) OLD AGE SECURITY & CANADA PENSION PLAN** 1-800-277-9914 www.servicescanada.gc.ca
- 2) MSP AND PHARMACARE:** Lower Mainland 604 683-7151; toll free in BC 1 800-683-7151
www2.gov.bc.ca
- 3) GREEN SHIELD CANADA,** 1-888-711-1119 www.greenshield.ca and/or other extended health benefits and dental coverage provider that you may have.